

# PROMOTIONAL CALENDAR

## Planning Ahead

Each year, we all strive to avoid the frenzied rush that precedes the celebration of Christmas. Planning ahead helps to reduce stress and brings into focus the real reason for our celebration: the gift of Christ. Keep your plans on track by adding dates from this itemized list to your church's calendar or automated software, or to your personal datebook.

## October 2018

- **Read over the materials.** Familiarize yourself with the theme and available resources.
- **Get ideas.** Visit the website at [www.christianwomenconnection.org](http://www.christianwomenconnection.org). Click on the "Christ's Birthday Observance" promotional page to view ideas that will enhance the Observance in your local congregation.
- **Form a planning committee.** Early in October, call a meeting to discuss the Christ's Birthday Observance. In many churches, the planning committee consists of the women's leader and the senior pastor. Consider involving your worship arts pastor or minister of music, other women from Christian Women Connection, or representatives from every ministry area to help incorporate all aspects of church life into the experience. After all, the Christ's Birthday Observance is much more than the offering. It includes prayer for missions, meditations, sermons, worship, and much more.

In the planning meeting, you should discuss and review the details of worship, Advent readings, and Project Prayer. At this meeting, review the materials that your church will need to order to make this event successful. You will find an order form in the materials packet with the Resource Book. Many materials are also available in Spanish, offering an opportunity for inclusiveness within your church or for outreach.

- **Order materials early!** A key element to a fruitful experience is ordering your materials early. Seeing displays or receiving handouts of posters, bookmarks, meditation journals, offering envelopes, and letterhead helps your congregation become excited about the offering. Waiting too long can prevent the materials from arriving in time for Advent. So please place your orders early.
- **Celebrate last year's accomplishments!** In October, you will receive your appreciation certificate for the previous year's Christ's Birthday Observance. Please share our appreciation with your congregation.



## November 2018

- **Prepare for Project Prayer.** Early in November, begin promoting and preparing for Project Prayer. Project Prayer can be a wonderful experience for your congregation as you stand together to pray for the world. Refer to the “Project Prayer” section of the Resource Book to help in planning this event.
- **Begin promoting the Observance.** Start placing posters and displays around the church on November 5. The Resource Book includes a section called “Additional Ideas for Display, Promotion, and Lasting Impact” that gives creative ways to share the theme with your church.
- **Consider purchasing meditation journals and bookmarks for your entire congregation.** Mail these resources to each family in your church and encourage them to use the devotional book throughout the Advent season. Plan to mail the materials for arrival in the last week of November.

## December 2, 2018: FIRST SUNDAY OF ADVENT

*Sermon Theme:* I Am Still Hopeful

**Advent Candle: Candle of Hope**

- Introduce the “Great Joy for All” theme to your church.
- Use the wide range of resources to make the Observance unified.
- Introduce the meditation journals. These are designed to help your congregation focus on Jesus, the Son of God. In these journals, you will find inspiring stories and meditations with questions for reflection after each day’s reading. At the end of the journal are additional reflective questions.
- Introduce the bookmarks and the concept of the *individual* goal for the Observance Offering.

## December 9, 2018: SECOND SUNDAY OF ADVENT

*Sermon Theme:* A Call to Respond at Christmas

**Advent Candle: Candle of Response**

- Talk with your congregation about how your church responds to the arrival of Jesus in your community and share stories of the church being the hands and feet of Jesus in the world.

## **December 16, 2018: THIRD SUNDAY OF ADVENT**

*Sermon Theme:* The Miracle of Christmas

**Advent Candle: Candle of Miracles**

- Share with the congregation about the miracle of Christmas. Have a time in the service during which people in your church can testify about the ways Jesus has changed their lives.
- Ask the congregation to begin considering what they will give next week to help share the miracle of Jesus.
- Whether you use slides, skits, bulletin information, verbal announcements, or all of the above, make certain that each Sunday the congregation is informed that the Christ's Birthday Offering will be collected on December 23, the final Sunday of Advent.

## **December 23, 2018: FOURTH SUNDAY OF ADVENT**

This is the week of Christmas and the final week of the Christ's Birthday Observance.

*Sermon Theme:* Experience Peace at Christmas

**Advent Candle: Candle of Peace**

- This morning, the offering will be taken using the adult and children's offering envelopes. Provide all morning service attendees with a brochure that shows how the offering is used to share God's love around the world. You may want to include this in your bulletin or have ushers hand out the flyers before the service so that people can prepare for the offering.
- Before the offering is taken, remind the congregation of the meaning of the offering. Pass out the offering envelopes and allow time for people to make decisions and complete their offering envelopes. You may have a time of silence, or you may want music playing softly.
- Collect the offering. Consider having people come forward to place their offerings in a common basket or container. Encourage them to stop at the altars and pray for the ministry of the local church and the church around the world.



## January 2019

- Remit your congregation's offering to the state treasurer of Christian Women Connection. If you do not know where to send the offering, refer to the list in the materials packet. You may also contact the Christian Women Connection national offices toll free at (866) 778-0804.
- Thank your congregation for a job well done. Contact Christian Women Connection with any thoughts or ideas you have about the Christ's Birthday Observance. If you would like to send us a story about your church, visit us online at [www.christianwomenconnection.org](http://www.christianwomenconnection.org), e-mail us at [frontdesk@wchog.org](mailto:frontdesk@wchog.org), or call us toll free at (866) 778-0804.
- During 2019, continue to offer opportunities for your congregation to rejoice together through testimony, fellowship, and prayer for one another.
- Encourage the congregation to begin saving for the Christ's Birthday Observance in 2019. Maybe some of the young people in the church could create decorative envelopes or boxes. Celebrate the birth of Jesus throughout the year.